
FIRE FACT NO. 042 CHECKLIST(s) : 06E

TITLE : DECORATIONS IN SCHOOL CORRIDORS AND ROOMS

CHECKLIST ITEM(s) : 06E-19 & 20

REFERENCE(s) : 91-101/31-1.4.5 & 31-3.9

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A variety of events occur during the school year involving the use of decorations and other seasonal materials. The use of non-approved materials for these applications greatly increases the risk to the building occupants.

Some of the materials used (hay, straw, and most plastics including artificial Christmas trees that have not been treated with fire retardant, etc) exhibit flammable and rapid burning characteristics under fire conditions. The use of rapidly burning materials in corridors and rooms effectively eliminates built-in safety provided by building construction. Previously, the Fire Service Council of Kansas voted unanimously to recommend to the Kansas State Fire Marshal that no live-cut Christmas trees be permitted in schools. **The Kansas State Fire Marshal will not allow any live-cut Christmas trees in schools.**

Additionally, these decorations generally include temporary electrical wiring and excessive use of extension cords. These unsafe conditions increase the risk of a fast-spreading fire.

Even the use of acceptable decorations can create a dangerous situation. Decorations also must not be hung from sprinkler pipes. Doing so could compromise the ability of the system to perform as designed in the event of an emergency. Care should be taken that any added decorations or props do not hide or constrict exiting. All required exits must be readily accessible and can not be blocked. Exit signs on walls or hanging from ceilings must be visible and can not be obstructed.

It is not our intent to prohibit decorations; rather, we must insure that the decorations used do not create an unreasonable risk to occupants.

It is the responsibility of building owners and operators to develop a set of instructions for teachers and event sponsors which outline requirements for acceptable materials used in decorations and special events. Consult your local fire department or the Kansas State Fire Marshal if you have questions.

